

Just Another Fight.

Written by Brook Gilchirst

The simple reality of school fights is this; they're a waste of time.

School fights have risen at Kennedy and schools across America. In fact, according to a survey by the National Center for Education Statistics, approximately 46% of schools in America have seen an increase in fighting and violence.

The big causes of fights may include rumors and a lack of respect and conversation between peers—social media has also clearly had an impact in the increase in school fights.

Many arguments start on social media and then later turn into physical fights on school grounds, attracting student spectators and staff responders.

When a fight occurs there is often at least one student recording that will eventually be sent throughout social media, bringing this issue full circle to the online platforms on which it often begins. Students feel a need to record any fight that happens; seeing it as free fun and entertainment.

The need to record is so odd and doesn't make any sense, is it funny or more of a morbid fascination? Most students watching on the sides are cheering or chanting for the fight to start or to keep going as they hold their phone up to record. Students find it fun and exciting to watch a fight because they don't know what to expect and can't keep their eyes off of it.

While this is a massive concern for student safety, it's also concerning for teachers and staff due to their responsi-

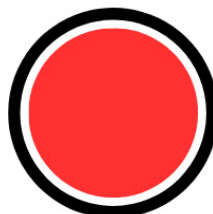
bility to break up fights and the risk of being attacked in turn by a violent student. Although teachers are not obligated to get physically involved, it's difficult for adults to watch someone in danger and not intervene.

Not only do these fights affect the students and teachers involved, but school fights cause disruption to classes, diverting students' and teachers' attention and pausing learning.

A majority of students will agree that school fights can simply be solved by talking it out rather than getting physical. While the more sensible option is to talk things out, many students go the more difficult route and bring their argument into schools with force. These fights show a lack of both discipline and maturity.

Fights have gotten to the point where they are such a common occurrence that they are normalized throughout schools where it's not uncommon to witness a fight. This can make students scared to come to school because of the fear of getting into a fight or being near one. It is wrong that in schools that fights have become the norm.

Students who don't get into fights often ask themselves what the solution is. Ultimately, the solution has to come from the students who decide to fight. If the consequences they will have to face deter them from fighting or the shame they may feel from their altercations being posted isn't enough to prove that physical force isn't the answer, what will?



Just Another Cautious Teacher.

Written by Lucy McCord and Miya Parker

Teachers throughout the Cedar Rapids Community School District (CRCSD) use certain tactics to keep their classrooms safe. Plans for fires, tornado safe rooms and steps to keep out intruders. But why do we constantly practice these situations?

“We have been doing fire and tornado drills for such a long time because when you practice what to do, your brain will be more likely to remember what to do in the event of a real emergency,” consumer science teacher Tammy Miller said.

Some teachers are more cautious than others, going over their expectations monthly while other teachers value the one scheduled drill per semester.

“We go over them at the start of the semester, and I’m not sure what the value would be of doing it more often,” social

studies teacher George Anderson said. “Outside of starting a live simulation with blank rounds and mock deaths in the halls, how do you train for the reality of the situation? I think that focusing on positive relationships, students not bullying/harassing/isolating one another, and active attention to social media for a preventive approach is the best way to prevent these things.”

This school year, the entire CRCSD shut down on Oct. 2 due to a social media threat. Multiple days were spent finding out which school was to be targeted directly; the authorities didn’t even know if the threat was real. But they knew to take the situation seriously.

“If something like this is going to go down, very few people will respond correctly the average person does not train how to

respond to live fire situations while the bodies are flying, there are no drills or weekend training that are going to convert educators into a tactical response team that is cool under fire,” Anderson said. “It’s not the mental makeup of educators in general and it is not in our training wheelhouse.”

Students and teachers become more aware of the seriousness of safety precautions as incidents continue to arise. On Jan. 4 at Perry Middle and High School building, a 17 year old student shot and killed a sixth grader and injured five others. Principal Dan Marburger was protecting two students and was critically injured, dying later that Sunday around 8 a.m. Educators nationwide were left devastated by the news.

“I’ve been to Perry and know some folks in that community.

Every time I hear

about one of these things I just think about how far we’ve fallen,” Anderson said.

Teachers always do their best to keep the school and students as safe as possible. They work to go through each drill and make sure that students are aware of what to do in each situation.

“I think for the most part we are doing a lot to keep our school safe, but we can always do more. Individuals can do more, the school can do more, the district can do more and our community can do more,” Miller said. “I don’t believe safety has a limit to reach.”

Despite all of these precautions taken there are still dangers that can arise. Speaking out about anything that you hear or see can be important for keeping everyone in the community safe.

“I think we should be doing more so we can ingrain safety protocol into everyone’s brain. I also think we need to keep an ongoing conversation about school safety and speaking out when you see or hear something unsettling,” Miller said.

